



GREEN SPRING GARDENS PARK

PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

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RECOMMENDED ANNUALS, BIENNIALS, TENDER PERENNIALS, AND TENDER BULBS FOR GARDENS IN THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

Annuals, biennials, tender perennials, and tender bulbs add bold splashes of color and texture to the garden. Most species have glorious blossoms with an astounding range of colors, but others have brilliant foliage, such as coleus, or a wealth of color in their fruit, such as ornamental pepper. These plants play a supporting role in the garden - they do not provide a great deal of structure, but instead add an air of spontaneity and playfulness. Most of these plants require full sun (6 hours or more of sunlight daily) and perform best in moist, rich soil. Some species prefer or tolerate some shade (e.g., *nicotiana*), while others can take wet sites (e.g., elephant ear) or dry sites (e.g., *Tithonia* or Mexican sunflower).

True annuals complete their life cycle in one growing season - from seed to flower back to seed again, then death. Since they are not trying to put a significant portion of their resources underground as perennials do, most put their energies instead into flowering and producing seed. Consequently, their length of bloom is longer than most perennials. Some hardy annuals (e.g., pansies) are grown for their fall, winter, and spring flowers and are generally removed when the heat of the summer starts. Tender annuals and many half-hardy annuals are at the height of their glory in the summer, and even into the fall. In addition, some plants that are grown as annuals here are perennials (e.g., Madagascar periwinkle) or even trees (e.g., spiral eucalyptus) in their native habitats, but are not fully hardy in our temperate climate.

Tender annuals need to be planted after all danger of frost is past, so the best time to plant in the Washington, D.C. area is after May 1. Half-hardy annuals can be planted outdoors after April 15, and hardy annuals can be planted before April 15. Most annuals are grown from seed indoors, then planted outside at the recommended time. However, it is best to direct seed some species (e.g., larkspurs).

Biennials are plants that complete their life cycle in two years. The first year they produce only leaves; they overwinter, flower, set seed, and die the second year. Some biennials can be short-lived perennials, especially if they are not allowed to set seed. Biennials are primarily grown for their showy flowers, although some species (e.g., Olympic mullein) have a striking architectural habit. Biennials are hardy plants, so they can be planted before April 15 and are sometimes planted in the fall.

Most tender perennials and bulbs are grown for their marvelous flowers, but some are grown for their foliage. Foliage types range from the large, imposing leaves of elephant ear to the fragrant green or

variegated foliage of scented geraniums. These plants should be planted outdoors after May 1. Tender perennials and bulbs generally need to be overwintered indoors, but some species will survive mild winters. Tender perennials are overwintered as rooted cuttings or potted plants. Some tender bulbs can be dug up after the first hard frost and stored indoors (usually in a cool, dark place; exceptions are noted in the comments column), while others are dug up before the first hard frost and overwintered as potted plants. In addition, listed tender bulbs are actually tubers, corms, or rhizomes in botanical terms; none of these tender bulbs go dormant in the summer like many hardy bulbs do.

The following species grow well in the ground in the Washington, D.C. area (a wider variety of plants do well in containers). The list is divided into the following categories: a) tender annuals, b) tender perennials, c) tender bulbs, d) half-hardy annuals, and e) biennials and hardy annuals. Species that are native to Virginia are marked with an asterisk (*).

TENDER ANNUALS

Scientific Name	Common Name	Comments
<i>Ageratum houstonianum</i> (‘Blue Horizon’ is taller than most cvs.)	Ageratum	Full sun
<i>Asclepias curassavica</i>	Blood Flower	Full sun; reseeds readily; drought tolerant
<i>Basella alba</i> ‘Rubra’	Malabar Spinach	Full sun; leaves are edible; some reseeding; a vine
<i>Begonia semperflorens-cultorum</i> hybrids (‘Pink Avalanche’ fills out nicely)	Fibrous-rooted Begonia, Wax Begonia	Full sun to part shade; can treat as a tender perennial
<i>Capsicum annuum</i>	Ornamental Pepper	Full sun; fruit is edible but often hot for ornamental types
<i>Catharanthus roseus</i>	Madagascar Periwinkle	Full sun; wonderful plant for interpretive use – used as leukemia treatment
<i>Celosia argentea</i>	Celosia	Full sun
<i>Cosmos bipinnatus</i> <i>C. sulphureus</i>	Cosmos	Full sun; reseed readily; loved by rabbits; drought tolerant
<i>Eucalyptus cinerea</i> (drought tolerant but then grows slowly)	Spiral Eucalyptus	Full sun; winter hardy in some years; easiest to start from seed (indoors)
<i>Gomphrena globosa</i> & <i>G. haageana</i>	Globe Amaranth	Full sun
<i>Hibiscus acetosella</i> ‘Red Shield’	Red Shield Hibiscus	Full sun
<i>Impatiens walleriana</i> Note: <i>I. capensis</i> * (jewelweed) is a tall native – grows in moist to wet sites – naturalistic use	Impatiens	Light shade to part shade in constantly moist sites; reseeds readily in moist sites
<i>Nicotiana langsdorfii</i> <i>N. × sanderae</i> (<i>N. alata</i>) <i>N. sylvestris</i>	Nicotiana, Flowering Tobacco	Full sun to part shade; reseed readily; plants sometimes winter hardy; <i>N. sylvestris</i> is a half-hardy annual according to one reference but best treated as a tender annual

<i>Ocimum basilicum</i> 'Siam Queen' & purpleleaf cvs.	Ornamental Sweet Basil	Full sun; tasty culinary herb
<i>Petunia</i> × <i>hybrida</i> <i>P. integrifolia</i> (can overwinter as cuttings; winter hardy in some years)	Petunia Violet Petunia	Full sun to light shade; sometimes reseeds
<i>Ricinus communis</i> (‘Carmencita’ is the shortest cultivar)	Castor Bean	Full sun; reseeds readily; highly poisonous even though castor bean oil comes from seeds (leached) – do not eat!
<i>Salvia coccinea</i> (‘Brenthurst’ = ‘Coral Nymph’; white-flowered form also)	Tropical Salvia	Full sun to light shade; can be treated as a tender perennial & propagated by cuttings; some reseeding
<i>Tithonia rotundifolia</i> (‘Aztec Sun’, ‘Torch’)	Mexican Sunflower	Full sun; best in drier sites to control flopping (drought tolerant); some reseeding
<i>Torenia fournieri</i> Note: <i>Torenia flava</i> ‘Suzie Wong’ has done well in shaded locations also	Wishbone Flower	Light shade to part shade
<i>Zinnia angustifolia</i> <i>Z. elegans</i> (tallest species) <i>Z. haageana</i> ‘Persian Carpet’ <i>Z. Profusion</i> series	Zinnia	Full sun

TENDER PERENNIALS

Scientific Name	Common Name	Comments
<i>Abutilon</i> × <i>hybridum</i> ‘Marion Stewart’ (‘Souvenir de Bonn’ has also performed well)	Marion Stewart Abutilon or Flowering Maple	Full sun; ‘Marion Stewart’ is winter hardy some years with a heavy winter mulch
<i>Alternanthera dentata</i> ‘Wave Hill’	Purple-leaved Alternanthera	Full sun
<i>Arctotis</i> × <i>hybrida</i> ‘Flame’ & ‘Wine’	African Daisy	Full sun
<i>Cuphea llavea</i> ‘Georgia Scarlet’ & <i>C. ignea</i> hybrid ‘David Verity’	Cuphea	Full sun
<i>Cymbopogon citratus</i>	Lemongrass	Full sun; overwinter as potted plants; a culinary herb – edible leaves
<i>Duranta erecta</i> ‘Golden Edge’	Golden Edge Duranta	Full sun to light shade
<i>Ipomoea batatas</i> ‘Blackie’ & ‘Margarita’	Ornamental Sweet Potato	Full sun; tubers edible but not very tasty
<i>Lantana camara</i> (‘Miss Huff’, the hardiest cv., overwinters some years; <i>L. trifolia</i> is beautiful but harder to overwinter indoors)	Lantana	Full sun; drought tolerant

<i>Lavandula dentata</i> Note: <i>L. stoechas</i> subsp. <i>pedunculata</i> (Spanish lavender), <i>L. angustifolia</i> (English lavender), & <i>L. × intermedia</i> are often short-lived perennials in our area; plant them in well-drained soil that has been amended with sand, pea gravel, &/or chicken grit	French Lavender	Full sun; mulching <i>L. angustifolia</i> & <i>L. × intermedia</i> with pea gravel has also been helpful; drought tolerant
<i>Musa</i> ‘Zebrina’ (taller) & <i>M.</i> ‘Sumatrana’ × ‘Grand Nain’ (shorter)	Blood Banana	Full sun; easiest to overwinter as a potted plant
<i>Pelargonium</i> – scented geranium species, hybrids, & cvs. that perform well in beds & borders include ‘Lady Plymouth’, ‘Peacock’, <i>P. sidoides</i> , ‘Silver Rose Scented’, & ‘Snowflake’	Scented Geranium	Full sun; sometimes winter hardy
<i>Pennisetum setaceum</i> ‘Rubrum’ (very similar to ‘Purpureum’)	Purpleleaf Fountain Grass	Full sun; overwinter as potted plants
Phormium – purpleleaf selections like <i>P. tenax</i> ‘Purpureum’	Purpleleaf Phormium or New Zealand Flax	Full sun; overwinter as potted plants; sometimes winter hardy if heavily mulched
<i>Plectranthus amboinicus</i> ‘Athens Gem’ <i>P. argentatus</i> <i>P. madagascariensis</i> ‘Marginatus’ (creeping plant)	Athen’s Gem Plectranthus Silverleaf Plectranthus Variegated Madagascar Plectranthus	Full sun
<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i> (‘Prostratus’, ‘Tuscan Blue’)	Rosemary	Full sun; ‘Arp’ & ‘Hill Hardy’ (‘Madalene Hill’) are winter hardy (well-drained sites); other cvs. are hardy in mild winters; drought tolerant
<i>Salvia elegans</i> <i>S. chamaedryoides</i> <i>S.</i> ‘Indigo Spires’ <i>S. involucrata</i> ‘Bethellii’ <i>S. leucantha</i> (‘All Purple’ = ‘Midnight’, ‘Emerald’, ‘Eder’) <i>S. mexicana</i> ‘Limelight’ <i>S. microphylla</i> ‘San Carlos Festival’ & ‘La Trinidad Pink’; hybrids include ‘Cherry Chief’ <i>S. miniata</i> <i>S.</i> ‘Purple Majesty’	Pineapple Salvia or Sage Mexican Blue Salvia Indigo Spires Salvia Roseleaf Salvia Mexican Bush Salvia Limelight Salvia Salvia Belize Salvia Purple Majesty Salvia	Full sun; some plants of the following salvias have been winter hardy during mild winters unless stated otherwise (<i>S. microphylla</i> & <i>S. microphylla</i> × <i>greggii</i> hybrids are the hardiest & will survive most winters); <i>S. chamaedryoides</i> , <i>leucantha</i> , <i>microphylla</i> , & <i>microphylla</i> hybrids are very drought tolerant <i>S. miniata</i> is never winter hardy

<i>Salvia splendens</i> 'Van Houttei' ('Caroline' – purple flowers)	Van Houtte Salvia	Never winter hardy
<i>Solenostemon</i> (<i>Coleus</i>) <i>scutellarioides</i> (types that are grown from seed are generally grown as annuals – not as showy)	Coleus	Full sun to part shade; some are very sun adaptable & others are not
<i>Stachys coccinea</i>	Stachys	Full sun in well-drained sites (drought tolerant); winter hardy during many years
<i>Thunbergia battiscombei</i>	Thunbergia	Full sun to light shade

TENDER BULBS

Scientific Name	Common Name	Comments
<i>Canna</i> species, hybrids, & cvs.	Canna	Full sun; tolerates wet & dry sites; dig up after first hard frost & store dormant; winter hardy in many years with a thick winter mulch (well-drained sites best)
<i>Colocasia esculenta</i> ('Black Magic' – dig up before hard frost; have been overwintering this cv. indoors as a potted plant) Note: <i>Alocasia</i> 'Portodora' is similar – overwinter indoors as a potted plant	Elephant Ear	Full sun to light shade in moist to wet sites; dig up species type after the first hard frost & store dormant; species type is winter hardy in some years with a thick winter mulch
<i>Hedychium coronarium</i> <i>H.</i> 'Peach Delight' ('Elizabeth' is beautiful but blooms best once established – the 2 nd year after planting; 'Daniel Weeks' looks promising)	Ginger Lily	Full sun to light shade; dig up before first hard frost if want to overwinter indoors as potted plants; winter hardy in many years with a thick winter mulch

HALF-HARDY ANNUALS

Scientific Name	Common Name	Comments
<i>Ammi majus</i>	Bishop's Weed	Full sun
<i>Antirrhinum majus</i>	Snapdragon	Full sun; prefers cool weather; can overwinter some years
<i>Beta vulgaris</i> 'Vulcan' & other red-foliaged cvs.	Ruby Chard	Full sun; direct seed in April; leaves are edible
<i>Cleome hassleriana</i>	Cleome	Full sun; reseeds readily
<i>Helenium amarum</i> (naturalized in VA – originally western U.S. native)	Annual Helenium	Full sun; probably at least half-hardy; reseeds readily in certain locations; drought tolerant

<i>Salvia farinacea</i>	Mealy Cup Sage	Full sun to light shade; sometimes winter hardy but usually grown as an annual
<i>Tagetes patula</i>	French Marigold	Full sun; prefers warm weather (best to plant after May 1)

BIENNIALS AND HARDY ANNUALS

Scientific Name	Common Name	Comments
<i>Angelica gigas</i> (biennial; <i>A. triquinata</i> * - naturalistic use)	Korean Angelica	Full sun (moist site) to light shade; some reseeding in moist sites
<i>Argemone polyanthemos</i> (annual or biennial; <i>A. mexicana</i> – annual)	Prickly Poppy	Full sun; prefers warm weather; drought tolerant; some reseeding
<i>Chrysanthemum</i> × <i>morifolium</i> (<i>Dendranthema</i> × <i>grandiflorum</i>)	Chrysanthemum	Full sun; often grown as an annual but many cvs. are perennial; drought tolerant
<i>Consolida ambigua</i> (<i>C. ajacis</i>) (annual)	Larkspur	Full sun to light shade; reseeds readily; seed directly in fall or early spring
<i>Cynara cardunculus</i>	Cardoon	Full sun; grown as an annual if using for foliage effect; grown as a biennial or short-lived perennial if flowers desired but not always winter hardy
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i> (biennial)	Foxglove	Full sun (moist site) to light shade; reseeds readily in moist sites
<i>Euphorbia marginata</i> ‘Summer Icicle’ (annual)	Snow-on-the-mountain	Full sun; reseeds readily; direct seeding easiest; drought tolerant
<i>Helianthus annuus</i> (annual; naturalized in VA – native further west; ‘Italian White’ blooms for the longest period)	Sunflower	Full sun; prefers warm weather; can direct seed; cvs. with larger seeds are edible; drought tolerant
<i>Hesperis matronalis</i> (biennial to short-lived perennial)	Dame’s Rocket	Full sun to light shade; reseeds readily in moist sites
<i>Matricaria recutita</i> (annual)	German Chamomile	Full sun; some reseeding; prefers cool weather; an herb used in tea
<i>Nigella damascena</i> (annual)	Love-in-a-mist	Full sun; reseeds readily; best to direct seed in spring or fall
<i>Oenothera biennis</i> * (annual or biennial) Note: <i>O. argillicola</i> * (shale barren sundrops) can be a biennial or a short-lived perennial	Evening Primrose	Full sun to light shade; grown primarily for wildlife value (moths); drought tolerant
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i> (annual) <i>P. somniferum</i> (annual)	Corn Poppy Lettuce Poppy	Full sun; some reseeding in moist sites; easiest to direct seed; prefer cool weather

<i>Phacelia bipinnatifida</i> * (biennial)	Fern-leaved Phacelia	Light shade to part shade; reseeds readily
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> * & cvs. such as 'Indian Summer' (species type is best for naturalistic use) <i>R. triloba</i> * (biennial to short-lived perennial for both species)	Black-eyed Susan Three-lobed Coneflower	Full sun to light shade; species type of <i>R. hirta</i> reseeds but cvs. generally do not; <i>R. triloba</i> also reseeds
<i>Salvia argentea</i> <i>S. sclarea</i> (both are biennials)	Silver Sage Clary Sage	Full sun Full sun; reseeds readily
<i>Silybum marianum</i> (usually biennial)	Milk Thistle	Full sun; best to direct seed in spring or fall; reseeds readily
<i>Verbascum olympicum</i> (biennial to short-lived perennial)	Greek Mullein	Full sun; reseeds readily; drought tolerant
<i>Viola tricolor</i> (annual or short-lived perennial) ('E.A. Bowles' = 'Bowles Black'; the Sorbet series – hybrids with beautiful small flowers) <i>V. × wittrockiana</i> (annual)	Johnny-Jump-Up Pansy	Full sun to light shade; all prefer cool weather; best to plant in fall but can also plant in early spring; some reseeding of <i>V. tricolor</i>

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